

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4062

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 8974

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SP

SUBJ: MEETING WITH FOREIGN OFFICE UNDER SECRETARY

1. FOLLOWING MY CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER AREILZA THIS MORNING (SEPTEL), I PAID A BRIEF COURTESY CALL ON THE NEW UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MARCELINO OREJA, WHO WAS SWORN IN DECEMBER 22.

2. OREJA, ALTHOUGH A CAREER FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER, IS BASICALLY A POLITICIAN AND HAS BEEN VERY CLOSELY ASSOCIATED RECENTLY WITH AREILZA, FRAGA AND OTHERS IN FEDISA. HE CLEARLY HAS THE CONFIDENCE OF AREILZA AND WILL, OF COURSE, WORK CLOSELY WITH HIM, NOT ONLY ON SUBSTANTIVE FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, BUT ALSO ON THE MORE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM.

3. OREJA STATED THAT IT WAS THEGOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO MAKE SPAIN MORE DEMOCRATIC, BUT THAT IT WAS OBVIOUSLY NECESSARY TO USE THE PRESENT INSTITUTIONS AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE. IT WAS DANGEROUS TO GO TOO FAST AS THIS WOULD ONLY PROVOKE THE RIGHT. IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO PROCEED AT A RHYTHM WHICH WOULD NOT UNDULY UPSET THE RIGHT, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME WOULD NOT DISILLUSION THE NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION. HE SAID, AS HAD FRAGA, THAT IT WAS PREMATURE TO CONSIDER THE CREATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES AS SUCH, BUT THAT BY THE

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SAME TOKEN THE PRESENT LAW ON ASSOCIATIONS HAD TO BE

CHANGED. THE THOUGHT WAS TO PUT ASIDE THE ASSOCIATION LAW ADOPTED LAST YEAR AND THEN REFORM THE 1964 LAW IN THE HOPE THAT THAT AMENDED LAW WOULD PROVIDE A WAY IN WHICH VARIOUS POLITICAL GROUPS, SUCH AS THE NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION, COULD PLAY A ROLE. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, OREJA THOUGHT THAT THE PRESENT CORTES WOULD APPROVE SUCH AN AMENDED LAW, BUT IF NOT, THE GOVERNMENT COULD ISSUE A DECREE LAW. WHILE THE CORTES WOULD HAVE TO DEAL ULTIMATELY WITH THE DECREE LAW, THIS WOULD BE LESS OF A PROBLEM.

4. OREJA ALSO INDICATED THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO PLACE FOR THE COMMUNISTS IN THE PRESENT SITUATION, AND HE DEPLORED THE SOCIALIST ATTITUDE IN CERTAIN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TOWARD SOME FORM OF CLOSER UNDERSTANDING WITH THE COMMUNISTS.

5. I TOLD OREJA THAT HE COULD BE SURE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PRESSURE FROM US IN ANY WAY TO GO AT ANY FASTER PACE THAN WAS PRUDENT AND SAFE. THE NATURE OF THE EVOLUTION AND THE PACE THEREOF HAD TO BE DECIDED BY THE SPANISH THEMSELVES.

6. FINALLY, OREJA SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE US-SPANISH NEGOTIATIONS IN 1963 AND IN 1968, AND THAT HE LOOKED FORWARD TO A CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP FOR THE PERIOD AHEAD.

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